(a) whether it is a fact that Government have sent large number of officers from his Ministry on deputation to assignments in foreign countries;

(b) if so, the total staff sent on deputation to man various posts/assignments belonging to class I, II, III and IV categories in various foreign assignments; and

(c) the total number of persons belonging to SC/ST among them and their percentage as compared to total posts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) No, Sir. This Ministry has not sent any officer on deputation to foreign countries by itself. However, nominations are sent to the Department of Personnel & Training against their circulars, as and when received, inviting nominations for deputation in foreign countries.

(b) During the last 10 years, only two officers belonging to class-I were sent on foreign assingnments on deputation.

(c) Nil.

Inadequate supply of Industrial gas to Gujarat

†3022. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to inadequate supply of industrial gas, several ceramic industries of Gujarat are in crisis;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by Government to meet this scarcity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (c) Currently, the total allocation of on-shore natural gas to various consumers in Gujarat including ceramic industries is to the extent of 11.12 Million Standard Cubic Metre Per Day (MMSCMD). As against this, the availability of on-shore natural gas in Gujarat is to the extent of 5.89 MMSCMD. Petronet LNG Limited, a Joint Venture Company promoted by the Oil Public Sector Undertakings, is establishing an Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) terminal

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

at Dahej in Gujarat. The gap between the demand and supply of natural gas could be met by using the regassified LNG from the proposed Dahej Terminal.

Petitions regarding the selections made by Oil Selection Boards

†3023. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of petitions pending in each high Court in the country regarding the selections made on the basis of interviews conducted by Oil Selection Boards during the period from March 20, 1996 to April 8, 1996; and

(b) the number of petitions, S.L.Ps and appeals etc. pending in the Supreme Court regarding the selections made during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) and (b) As per available information, at present one petition and one appeal in the Calcutta high Court and one petition in the High Court of Gujarat are pending regarding selections made on the basis of interviews conducted by Oil Selection Board during the period from March 20, 1996 to April 8, 1996.

Target fixed for issue of LPG connections

†3024. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what target has been fixed regarding issue of new LPG connections during the current year;

(b) the number of new LPG connections issued by the various Oil Companies as on June, 2000; and

(c) what steps are being taken to increase the supply of LPG?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) Government have a plan to release 1 crore LPG (domestic) connections during the Calendar year 2000.

(b) The number of LPG connections released during the period January — June, 2000 in the country was about 66 lakhs.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.